

has also been movement in the opposite direction: at times sedentary people—peasants, slaves, demobilized soldiers—have adopted a style of life much like that of the Bedouin. Those who see themselves as being of ancient Bedouin origin will often regard these newcomers and their descendants as different and inferior.

In the Western Sahara there was a substantial population of Arabic-speaking camel-herding nomads. Their ancestors mostly spoke Berber rather than Arabic and the descendants retain some characteristic Berber traits. In contrast to many Bedouin groups, they have a marked distaste for polygamy. They are often referred to in the literature as Moors or Sahrawis rather than as Bedouin. They have almost all settled in recent decades.

Until modern times most Bedouin lived in regions where government control was limited or nonexistent. They were organized in political units that are called tribes. Every sound man was a warrior. Each tribe had its own territory but was usually allowed to pasture its stock in the territories of neighboring tribes. The tribe had a leader who could represent it in dealings with the outside world; within his tribe a leader generally had influence rather than power. Relations between tribes might be peaceful or hostile but were in any case governed by Bedouin customary law. This law differed radically from Islamic law, even though many Bedouin felt a deep loyalty to the Islamic religion. So, for instance, Bedouin women had in many tribes far fewer rights than they have under Islamic law. In sharp contradiction to Islamic law, if one Bedouin man killed or injured another, then not only the perpetrator but also certain of his kinsmen were legitimate objects of revenge.

Bedouin culture is above all verbal: Bedouin are fond of storytelling, poetry, and argument. Their sedentary neighbors generally looked on them with a mixture of fear and contempt, but Westerners who have come to know them have often admired them for their integrity, their toughness, and their congeniality.

SEE ALSO *Arabia, Pre-Islam; 'Asabiyya; Ibn Khaldun (732/1332–808/1406).*

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BERBERS

Historically, the Berbers inhabited a vast region that extended from the extreme west of Egypt to Morocco, and from the Mediterranean shores to sub-Saharan Africa (Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso). The fourteenth-century CE historian Ibn Khaldun mentioned almost the same boundaries for Berber territory: from al-Maghrib (Morocco) to Alexandria and from the Roman Sea (Mediterranean Sea) to the country of the blacks (Ibn Khaldoun 1978).

The origin of the Berbers is mainly an ideological issue. Whereas Western and colonial authors associate them with Europe, Arab historians and intellectuals bring them back to the Middle East. In addition, many Berber communities identified themselves as originating from Yemen (Ibn Khaldoun 1978; Laroui 1977). It is worth mentioning that the history of the Berbers is known through non-Berber texts: Greek, Roman, and then Arab. The ancient history of the Berbers is associated with the partial colonization of their territories by the Romans, the Byzantines, and the Vandals on the one hand, and the foundation of Berber independent kingdoms on the other. Among the early kings, who reigned at the end of the third century BCE, were Syphax, Masinissa, and Baga. Berber dynasties ruled ancient Egypt for centuries (1227–935 BCE (Chafik 2005; Laroui 1977)).

In 45/665 the Arab armies conquered the Maghrib and faced a strong military resistance. The most famous leaders of the Berber resistance were Kusayla and Dahiya (the latter known as Kahina in Arabic historiography). The Arab conquest was the beginning of a great transformation of Berber communities, a transformation featuring their progressive Islamization and Arabization. Afterward, the resistance took the form of schisms. Berber communities adopted Kharijism (Ibadite and Sufrite trends), a doctrine that stressed asceticism, frugality, and egalitarianism. Based on this doctrine, small states, such as the Barghawata (126/744) and the Midrarids (137/757), were established.

From the tenth to the thirteenth centuries CE, the Maghrib became a political entity with the formation of empires in the east by the Fatimids (296/909–566/1171) and the Zirids (361/972–547/1152) and in the west by



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the Almoravids (465/1073–541/1147) and the Almohads (524/1130–668/1269). The Fatimids ruled the Maghrib and Egypt. The Almoravid and the Almohad empires stretched from Senegal to Spain and from the Atlantic to present-day Tunisia (Ibn Khaldoun 1978; Laroui 1977). Berbers played a key role in the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. Then they contributed to the development of Andalusian civilization. Arabo-Berber or Moorish culture is expressed in architecture, particularly through the Almohads' squared-based minarets, such as those of the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakesh and the Giralda in Seville.

Berber scholars were active in Arabic and Islamic studies at an early date. For instance, the Shaykh of Córdoba, Yahya ibn Yahya ibn Shimial al-Masmudi (d. 234/848), introduced the *Muwatta'*, the legal manual of Malik ibn Anas, to the Maghrib. Many others such as Abu 'Amran al-Fasi (d. 430/1039) and his disciple Wag-gag ibn Zallou (d. 454/1062) played key roles in the

spread of Malikism (Ibn Khaldoun 1978), which has been dominant among Berbers. Currently, only a few Ibadite communities are found, located in Libya (Jabal Nafusa), Tunisia (Jerba), and Algeria (Mzab).

Sufism was cited by many historians as a privileged domain of the Berbers. Abu Yi'azza (d. 572/1176), Abu Madyan (or Mediane; d. 594/1198), Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili (d. 656/1258), Abu Abdullah al-Jazuli (d. 870/1465), and many others contributed to the growth of Sufism among Berbers and beyond. Berber scholars also wrote books on Arabic grammar. One of the most famous of them is *al-Ajrumiyya*, by Abdullah ibn Ajrum al-Sanhaji (d. 723/1323) (Chafik 2005; Norris 1982).

LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

After the Islamization of the Berbers, the Arabization of the political and intellectual elites, and the return of Andalusians to the main cities of the Maghrib, the use of the phrase "history of the Berbers" (by, for example, Ibn Khaldun) became problematic. The Berber language and culture have been intellectually and politically marginalized. Berber states adopted an Arab ideology while remaining Berber by virtue of their geographical location and their demographic and sociological base. Berbers speak different dialects. Some linguists believe there was a common Berber ancient language; others, by contrast, defend the existence of Berber dialects that were very close to each other. Berber dialects have been challenged by Arabic and mostly by the dominant everyday speech (*darija* or *'Ammiyya*), which is a mix of Berber and Arabic. Thus, most Berbers are bilingual.

In the past, the Berbers did not claim any cultural or linguistic unity. Their elites were often proud of their Arab culture. The awareness and the claim of the Berber identity are recent. This is more evident in Algeria and Morocco and among the Tuaregs. In Algeria the issue of Berber identity was raised in the 1930s (Chaker 1998). According to the dominant nationalist ideologies, however, any attempt to promote awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity should be proscribed. Cultural diversity was for a long period associated with the colonial division of nations. Since the 1970s Amazigh intellectuals have created, particularly in Algeria and Morocco, cultural organizations that aimed to promote Amazigh culture. Some of them had collaborated, since 1967, within the Berber academy (Agraw Imazighen) located in Paris. In the case of the Tuareg, the issue is different: rebellions and regional independence have been supported by armed movements against the Nigerian and Malian governments (Ilahiane 2006).

The strategy of the Amazigh movement is varied and complex (Chaker 1998; Rachik 2006). Since the mid-1980s Amazigh identity and tradition have been

intensively elaborated on and invented. The word *Berber* is frequently contested for its association with Barbary. To refer to the language of their interlocutors, Arabs used the word *barbara*, which means a mixture of unintelligible screaming (Ibn Khaldoun 1978). Berber activists prefer to refer to themselves as Amazigh or other names derived from the same *mzg* root, such as Amacheg. The word *Amazigh* refers to freedom, independence, and nobility among stratified communities. The word *Tamazgha* was invented to refer to the land of the Amazighs. The Amazigh Cultural Movement has struggled for, among other things, recognition of Amazigh as an official language, the valorization of pre-Islamic history, and the right for Amazighs to give Amazigh names to their children. These claims have sometimes been violently expressed and repressed, as occurred in Algeria in 1980 and in Morocco in 1994.

The official recognition of Amazigh identity has been progressive: the Algerian and Moroccan states established, respectively, the High Commission on Amazighness in 1995 and the Royal Institute of the Amazigh Culture in 2001. The Algerian Constitution of 1996 recognized Amazigh identity as a fundamental component of the national identity. The Moroccan Constitution of 2011 went further by recognizing the Amazigh language as an official language alongside Arabic. The Amazigh Cultural Movement's struggle is also conducted at the supranational level. Amazighs, as an imagined community, now have many emblems: the flag approved during the first Amazigh World Congress held in the Canary Islands in 1997, the alphabet known as Tifinagh, and rituals, mainly Yennayer, the Amazigh New Year.

SEE ALSO *Morocco; Sahara.*

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BID'A

A *bid'a* (pl. *bida'*) is an innovation in theology, ritual, or the customs of daily life, that did not exist in early Islam but came into existence in the course of history.

The term itself does not appear in the Qur'an, although the holy book includes other derivations of the root *bd'*. In the hadith literature *bid'a* is often used in contrast with the term *sunna*. In this sense *sunna* denotes the exemplary standard for Muslim life, as this was established by the prophet Muhammad and the pious Muslims of early Islam; for this reason, a *bid'a*, being a deviation from the normative *sunna*, was almost exclusively regarded as negative. This idea can be found in the canonical collections of hadith literature and was, for example, put into words in the Prophetic saying: "The worst of all things are novelties (*muhdathat*); every novelty is an innovation (*bid'a*), and every innovation is an error (*dalala*), and every error leads to hell."

Apart from this negative understanding of the concept of *bid'a*, a positive interpretation also could be given to the term. This was done by using another saying from the hadith literature. These words are attributed to the second caliph 'Umar who, after he had seen an innovation in the rite of the ritual prayer (*salat*), is reported to have said: "Truly, this is a good *bid'a*." On the basis of this saying the great jurisconsult al-Shafi'i (767–820) made a distinction between good and objectionable *bid'as*. As a result of this, the possibility was created to introduce new ideas and practices into Islam for which there were no precedents in early Islam, but which could now be accepted as good innovations. Later scholars further manipulated the term *bid'a* by adding various other, usually legal, adjectives to it. For example, the prolific Egyptian author Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (849/1445–911/1505) mentions the application of the five legal classifications (*al-ahkam al-khamsa*) to the term, thus making a distinction between "forbidden," "reprehensible," "indifferent," "recommended," and "obligatory" *bid'as*.

Although this flexible interpretation of the concept of *bid'a* was thus known from an early period onward, later scholars adhered exclusively to its negative interpretation. A well-known representative of this stream is the theologian and jurisconsult Taqi al-Din ibn Taymiyya (661/1263–728/1328), who spent his entire life fighting *bid'as*